

# EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **SENIOR U.S. DIPLOMAT CONCLUDES VISIT TO DHAKA RECOGNIZES OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING BANGLADESH**

**Dhaka, February 16 --** U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Geoffrey R. Pyatt departed Dhaka on Sunday, February 13, concluding three days of meetings with government officials, Members of Parliament, business groups, media, and civil society leaders.

Throughout his visit, Mr. Pyatt acknowledged the excellent state of U.S.-Bangladesh relations across a variety of initiatives from development to regional security. During a cordial, productive meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he saluted the positive role Bangladesh was playing in addressing some of the key challenges of the 21st century, including climate change. In all his meetings, Mr. Pyatt stressed the important role of grassroots organizations in the economic and democratic development of Bangladesh, saying “Bangladesh’s strength comes from the grass roots and that’s something that sets you apart.” During his visit, Mr. Pyatt was honored to meet with Grameen Bank founder and Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, remarking, “Dr. Yunus personifies the success of Bangladesh’s civil society and this grassroots dynamism.” In meetings with government officials, Pyatt conveyed widespread and high-level concern throughout the U.S. government that the current investigation of Grameen Bank be conducted in a transparent and politically unbiased manner, noting the importance of the work of this institution and its value as a symbol of Bangladesh’s civil society.

Pyatt had the opportunity to meet Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia and Jamaat-i-Islami Assistant Secretary General Barrister Razzaque during his visit. He also had the pleasure of visiting Bangladesh’s Parliament building, designed by American architect Louis Kahn, where

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he called upon the Deputy Speaker and discussed the importance of multi-party political participation in a healthy democracy.

Pyatt also met with members of the American Chamber of Commerce on the margins of the U.S. Trade Show and shared thoughts and ideas about U.S.-Bangladesh trade and economic relations. Figures for 2010 indicate that U.S. exports to Bangladesh rose 32.75% to \$577 million, while Bangladesh exports to the U.S. also increased, growing by 16.07% to \$4.29 billion. U.S.-Bangladesh bilateral trade rose 17.8% from \$4.134 billion in 2009 to \$4.871 billion in 2010.

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**GR/ 2011**